

August 21, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW, CY-B402
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED

AUG 21 2002

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

RE: WC Docket No: 02-214
Application by Verizon Corporation for Authorization Under
Section 271 to Provide Long Distance Service In the State of
Virginia

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Organizations Concerned about Rural Education (OCRE) is pleased to submit the following comments in support of Verizon's application to provide In-Region, Interlata Service in the state of Virginia. As an advocate for rural schools, libraries, teachers and students, I urge you to support the application in order to bring competition into the state as quickly as possible.

OCRE is committed to ensuring that the best rates possible for telecommunications services are available for rural schools and libraries. Affordable access to the Internet, homework hotlines and distance learning from home is also important. This is especially significant for rural education where distance can often act as an obstacle and deny students access to the wealth of resources available across this nation and throughout the world. Learning does not end when the bell rings at the end of the school day.

I am particularly pleased with Verizon's dedication to address the needs of rural education and applaud their efforts to promote the E-rate program, distance learning applications, broadband deployment, teacher training and educational organizations throughout their footprint. As the first regional telephone company to secure approval from the FCC to enter the long distance market, Verizon has also demonstrated a continued commitment to their customers, including rural customers.

There is evidence that Verizon's entry into the long distance market has been an unqualified success, enhancing both local and long distance competition. By allowing Verizon into the long distance market in Virginia, the FCC will help to create the same level of competition for consumers in that state. This expanded competition will also drive down the cost of these services to schools and libraries and make a wider array of services more affordable to rural communities.

On behalf of the students, teachers and parents who live in rural America, OCRE urges the FCC to act quickly and approve the application.

Sincerely,



Dale Lestina
President

No. of Copies rec'd 0+4
List ABCDE



**Organizations Concerned
about
Rural Education**

901 Monroe Street N., #1507
Arlington, VA 22201
703-469-1443
cconrad37@comcast.net

President.....Dale Lestina
Vice President.....Kari Arfstrom
Secretary-Treasurer..Christopher Schepis
Trustees.....Steve Kohn, Randy Moody
Executive Director....Charles Conrad

Member Organizations

American Association of School
Administrators
American Association of State
Colleges and Universities
American Library Association
Communicating for Agriculture
Forest Counties School Coalition
Lightspan, Inc.
M W Financial, Inc.
National Association of Counties
National Association of Elementary
School Principals
National Association of Federally
Impacted Schools
National Association of Secondary
School Principals
National Education Association
National Education Knowledge
Industry Association
National Farmers Union
National Grange
National Indian School Boards
Association
National Rural Education Association
National Rural Electric Cooperative
Association
National School Boards Association
North Country Education Foundation
of New Hampshire
Rebuild America's Schools
Rural School and Community Trust
Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative
SBC Telecommunications, Inc.
U S West Communications
Verizon

Visit OCRE on the Web at www.ruralschools.org